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***Newtown Forest Association, Inc.***  
***P.O. Box 213***  
***Newtown, CT 06470***  
***203-270-3650***

March 13, 2009

RE: Raised Bill No. 1082: An Act Concerning the Preservation of State-Owned Agricultural Land

To our CT State Elected Officials:

On behalf of the officers and board of directors of the NEWTOWN FOREST ASSOCIATION, we would like you to support Bill No. 1082. The Town of Newtown is already a beneficiary of some "quasi" preserved State owned properties that are leased for agricultural purposes; however, there is no certainty that this will remain the case in perpetuity. Fortunately, the use of this property for agricultural purposes is a great asset to our Town and happens to be located in the immediate vicinity of our sole source aquifer; an area that needs special protection, not development.

We know that since the 1970s the State has had a goal of protecting 130,000 acres of Connecticut's agricultural land. In recent years the State has spent millions of dollars to purchase the development rights on Connecticut farms, but to date only about 32,000 acres have been preserved. Farmland preservation is given *high priority* in Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development as well as the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut.

The State currently owns an estimated 1,300 acres of unprotected farmland. In view of the State's policy and goal of protecting significantly more farmland than is currently protected, a study of state-owned land with recommendations for preservation is long overdue. State-held farmlands have historically been subject to Special Acts that transfer these lands to non-state entities for non-agricultural use. (In recent years there have been 9 such transfers amounting to 165 acres of farmland converted to non-agricultural uses.)

This bill provides a much needed first step toward preserving irreplaceable farmland that the state already owns. In a time of serious budget constraints this offers a way to permanently protect farmland at no cost!

Sincerely,

C.O.(Guy) Peterson, IV, CPA, Treasurer

Preserving Newtown's Natural Resources Since 1924  
[www.newtownforestassociation.org](http://www.newtownforestassociation.org)